

Dear Your Honor,

I want to first thank you for taking time to read our letters of concern. I know that your position must be quite challenging making so many decisions for the betterment of our school system. Dr. Wardynski has been very kind in speaking with me about matters regarding my son, who was/is grandfathered in to the school in which I teach, Jones Valley Elementary. However, we (the teachers) now need your guidance and help to hear our concerns. I am hoping that it is ok that we send such a request to you, as none of us want to violate the gag order placed, which is why we haven't spoken up on this matter sooner.

I am a single-mother, and have a son who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Jones Valley. I was very blessed five years ago to be able to allow him to attend the school in which I teach. I received a letter from Pupil Services, under the then Superintendent, Dr. Ann Roy Moore, stating that my son could attend this school and the feeder schools so that he could remain with his peers and remain in a community in which he is accustomed to after so many years. This situation has been ideal for me because I am able to bring him to work with me, stay and work long/late hours, and then leave with him to go home. I have no family in Huntsville to help me with my child. It has been the best situation for both of us that he is here with me when he is sick, to attend his school events, and I'm able to put in 100% as a teacher for Huntsville City Schools/Jones Valley because I'm able to stay late and come in early.

No one seems to be able to tell me if my letter received 5 years ago, grandfathering my son to attend this school and feeder schools is null and void. I am attaching a copy of that letter from Pupil Services. My son does not know anyone in our school district, not even one child in our neighborhood is his friend. This was a huge deal for me five years ago when I applied for him to receive an employee's student transfer request, because I needed him to feel as though he would belong to a community and make friends. He is also an only child, so taking him away from Jones Valley and the only friends/kids that he's known from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade would be DEVASTING to him. Also, it sounds as though according to the order that he would have to leave this school next year, unable to attend here for 6<sup>th</sup> grade (the last year here with his friends). He, [REDACTED], happens to be African American and that has helped and would help the student minority population at Jones Valley, and the feeder schools (Huntsville Middle/Huntsville High). He is a good representation for African Americans at this school, and I try to be a good representation for African American women here as well.

If my son can no longer attend Jones Valley with his friends, I don't know where that leaves me as a teacher. It has me reconsidering working for Huntsville City Schools and even living in Huntsville, Alabama, because the situation would not work with him attending a school and me working at a different school that's not at all close, especially having no one in this city that could help me if he got sick or injured. I am very involved at Jones Valley and they need me. I perform afternoon dismissal duty, am on the Behavioral Management Team, am the school rep for HEA and the Secretary for HEA, I provide after school tutoring, and some years after school French classes free of charge. I love Jones Valley, and I really enjoy working for Huntsville City Schools.

I hope, and honestly feel, as though the numerous teachers in this situation should be considered, as these are some of the hardest working people I've ever worked with. We all give more than 100%, per our test scores. Other school systems allow their teacher's children to attend their schools. I am hoping that my son, having his letter from Pupil Services grandfathering him in, would still apply so that he can continue to be with his friends and teachers for his emotional well-being.

This is especially important to me because I was a transient student, having attended 5 elementary schools growing up. This caused me to feel an emotional wreck and do poorly in school. My grades suffered, I was supposed to repeat third grade, and I ended up in Special Ed. My step-father was in the Navy so then I was even more transient as we moved place to place, country to country. I never feel as though I belong to a community. I feel lonely and sad most of the time knowing that I don't really have any family here in Huntsville. Because of this I have made the parents and teachers of Jones Valley my family, my community. I am creating the life for my son that I was not offered. Because of this, he has excelled in math and was in advance math class, has high test scores (grade equivalency wise, he is performing in some cases as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader). He does his work, is favored by teachers, and very active in Cub Scouts, Sports Club, After School aiding, Technology Club, Student Council Rep, and Robotics Club at Jones Valley. He is a fantastic role model for other African American (minority) children that will be here next year.

I tried selling my house to move into this area, but it sat on the market for a year. As a single-mother, and teacher, I don't have a lot of finances to just up and move. I cannot just move, even though I desire to just move into this area just to be even a bigger part of the Jones Valley Community and offer that to my son.

Please hear the voices of the teachers. Please let us continue working hard for Huntsville City Schools, while our children work and play at our feet. Let us continue to grow this school and be a part of these children's lives, while not having to take away from our own children's lives by not being able to be there at the same school with them or their 'new' school's activities that we will never be able to be a part of.

On behalf of all of the teachers who have children at Jones Valley and within HCS, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration. Please let me be able to look into my son's eyes and say to him that he is still grand-fathered in and that my letter from Pupil Services, five years ago, is not null and void. Thank you once more! I appreciate your time!

Kindest regards,

Nicole Thompson

Teacher, Jones Valley Elementary